

THE DOCTRINE OF MONROE

FULL TEXT OF THE NOW FAMOUS DOCUMENT.

President's Message Which First Expressed the Principle of America for Americans.

The Monroe doctrine was promulgated as a protest against foreign interference in affairs concerning the western hemisphere. The revolution which freed the thirteen colonies from the English yoke inspired the same desire to be free among the Spanish-American colonies. The revolts were successful and republics arose upon the ruins of broken Spanish authority. The attempt on the part of European powers to seize upon and divide up the territory lost to Spain was met by President Monroe in a bold statement which was sent to Congress in his annual message of December 2, 1823. Here it is in full:

It was stated at the commencement of the last session that a great effort was then making in Spain and Portugal to improve the condition of the people of those countries, and that it appeared to be conducted with extraordinary moderation. It need scarcely be remarked that the result has been so far very different from what was then anticipated. Of events in that quarter of the globe with which we have so much intercourse and from which we derive our origin we have always been anxious and interested spectators. The citizens of the United States cherish sentiments the most friendly in favor of the liberty and happiness of their fellowmen on that side of the Atlantic. In the wars of the European powers, in matters relating to themselves, we have never taken any part, nor does it comport with our policy to do so. It is only when rights are invaded or seriously menaced that we resent injuries or make preparations for our defense.

With the movements in this hemisphere we are of necessity more immediately connected, and by causes which must be obvious to all enlightened and impartial observers. The political system of the allied powers is essentially different in this respect from that of America. This difference proceeds from that which exists in their respective Governments. And to the defense of our own, which has been achieved by the loss of so much blood and treasure, and matured by the wisdom of their most enlightened citizens, and under which we have enjoyed unexampled felicity, this Nation is devoted.

We owe it, therefore, to candor and to the amicable relations existing between the United States and these powers to declare that we should consider any attempt on their part to extend their system to any portion of this hemisphere as dangerous to our peace and safety.

With the existing colonies or dependencies of any European power we have not interfered and shall not interfere. But with the governments which have declared independence and maintained it, and whose independence we have, on great consideration and on just principles, acknowledged, we could not view any interposition for the purpose of oppressing them or controlling in any other manner their destiny by any European power in any other light than as the manifestation of an unfriendly disposition toward the United States.

In the war between these new Governments and Spain we declared our neutrality at the time of their recognition, and to this we have adhered, and shall continue to adhere, provided no change shall occur which, in the judgment of the competent authorities of this Government, shall make a corresponding change on the part of the United States indispensable to their security.

The late events in Spain and Portugal show that Europe is still unsettled. Of this important fact no stronger proof can be adduced than that the allied powers should have thought it proper, on a principle satisfactory to themselves, to have interposed by force in the

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